



Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association

Turn Row Talk

Spring Issue 2015

Volume 20

President's Column

*Travis Vallee
Cenla Ag Services*

All of my clients have pretty much gone into risk management mode for this year. Depressed market prices, high inputs and a new farm bill have them very nervous. They will definitely just stick to the essentials and leave the “kitchen sink” out, even on the high production fields. I believe situations like this make an independent consultant even more valuable. Independent consultants see lots of scenarios play out each year making our experience and recommendations extremely valuable. We closely monitor “marginal” situations without hastily making potentially unnecessary applications. Producers have been blessed with good yields and prices over the last few years. I pray that they will be blessed with even better yields to overcome these depressed commodity prices for 2015, with better hopes for 2016.

Crop consulting or any job, for that matter, that deals directly with producers is very rewarding. Direct results of our recommendations are easily seen in a very short period of time. For example, you make one herbicide recommendation and the results are apparent when you return a few days later. I take great pleasure and feel great responsibility for affecting a producer's bottom line. These producers trust us with their livelihood and I do not take that lightly.

While I was building my consulting business, I would work in oil refineries as a boiler maker during the off season. The money was good and I got to travel the country, but I was usually one of hundreds punching a time clock. Although, I fixed equipment for these large companies, they couldn't care less if I was there or not. Conversely, I have had the same clients for many years and have developed lifelong friendships with them.

I was taught to pretty much focus on insect scouting in my early years. Then Bt cotton came about, the boll weevil was eradicated and Freedom to Farm changed things. Farmers increasingly wanted to know more about what was going on in their fields, other than insects. When I started on my own I realized that I needed to focus more than on just insect protection to stay in business, so I turned to the LACA, Louisiana Ag and Technology Conference speakers and LSU Agcenter for help. I started taking advantage of opportunities to spend time around some of the leaders of LACA, picking their brain and listening to them talk in normal conversation picking up nuggets of information. I got to hang around gentlemen like

Ray Young, Grady Coburn, Harold Lambert, Dwayne Coulon, and Rusty Elston, just to name a few. My business has grown exponentially since it was founded, thanks largely to LACA, LATMC, and relationships that I've nourished there and today I provide full service consulting along with precision soil sampling and variable rate prescriptions.

For those of you not involved or even not a member of the LACA, I urge you to reconsider. Odds are that you owe at least part of your success to this organization. Become involved and a good place to start is with the Program Planning Committee or just let Denise know you would like to become involved in some way.

Thoughts from Mr. Ray Young on the 2015 HOF Award

Glad LACA could honor a man like Mr. Willie Cooper. He has been such an integral part of Louisiana Agriculture for so many years. He helped to bring and disburse billions of dollars into the Louisiana State economy. He was well known in Washington as being consistent and dependable. Through the years he put together a team that has functioned well for Agriculture. His mentoring made it possible to find a person to “step in” when he “stepped out.” We are in good hands with Craig McCain at the helm. Thanks again, Mr. Willie!





Commissioner's Message

Once again Louisiana has set a new record for agricultural production. According to the LSU AgCenter total values for agriculture, forestry and aquaculture rose by over \$ 900 million (7.6%) to an all time high of \$12.7 billion. These gains were led by substantial increases in soybeans, timber and livestock. I congratulate all of the farmers, foresters, and fishers as well as their families and the entire team of research/development scientists, extension agents, consultants and industry professionals on this remarkable achievement.

Since 2007, agricultural production has risen from \$ 5.9 billion to \$ 12.7 billion. If we continue on this track, I am confident we will reach \$25 billion in production in the next ten years. We will continue to see a worldwide increase in the demand for food and fiber coupled with growth in distribution infrastructure and buying power.

This future hinges on our ability to continue to advance productivity, efficiency, overall profitability and sustainability. A key to our success lies in public and private research, development, and extension. Without this, we will advance but not to the level that we could achieve, nor in the shortest time frame possible. As great as our advances are, the future is now dependent on our collective action to demand sustainable funding of our universities and ag centers. For every public dollar invested in these agricultural research institutions we receive an astounding 32 dollar return on investment. These returns are both immediate and long term. A \$35 million cut to the AgCenter will result in a \$1.12 billion loss to our economy, as new varieties will be developed slower, if at all, and we will not benefit from cutting edge science in the prevention and diagnosis of crop pests and diseases. Furthermore, there will be significant lag time between scientific discovery and the application of new methods and technologies.

Additionally, these cuts will negatively impact our 4-H and FFA programs which currently serve more than 250 thousand children a year. These programs foster leadership, responsibility, accountability, and teach our young people not only about agriculture, forestry and aquaculture, but also develop self esteem and pride. Losing or diminishing these programs is simply unacceptable.

I am asking for your help. As community leaders it is imperative that we speak loudly and with one voice and demand that our tax dollars be spent in such a manner that will enhance the lives and futures of our children and advance the largest and fastest growing industries in this state. Please contact your legislators and first explain to them the critical nature of this issue and then ask for their commitment to advance this matter. The benefits are clear and undeniable. The opportunities ahead are simply incredible. I look forward to the challenges ahead and thank you for your support and guidance.

Mike Strain, DVM
Commissioner
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
(225) 922-1233

A Sad Farewell and Tribute to Fellow Consultant and My Friend, Al Broussard

I never saw him that he didn't have a smile and a twinkle in his eye, whether it be happy to see me, or up to some fun mischief. He affectionately called me "cuz" since when we had first met many years ago, I told him my maiden name was Broussard. He said we were undoubtedly kin somewhere down the line and he would figure out how sooner or later...

He was soft-spoken, a gentle man who wanted to be of service and help his fellow man. He was serving his third term as Mayor of Loreauville, his home town, which he loved dearly. He would also often speak of his fiancé, Phyllis, (Fe), and when he did his eyes lit up. He told me in February at our annual consultants' meeting, that he wanted me to meet her. He said, "Ya'll would get along just fine!" I told him to bring her next time, and he said he would...how quickly life can slip away from us...he had to leave us in his prime...

He had been a crop consultant for many years, and attended our consultants' annual meeting every year. I will miss Al's presence at our meeting. It was truly an honor to know him and call him my friend, and I'm sure there are many of you who feel the same...Farewell, my friend...until we meet again at the Broussard reunion in the sky...Denise Broussard Wright

Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship

Tax-deductible contributions to the *Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Louisiana Row Crop IPM* are encouraged and appreciated. Checks must be made payable to LSU Foundation with check memo indicating "Young Endowed Assistantship". Please mail checks to:

**Denise Wright, Executive Director
Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association
P.O. Box 347
Cheneyville, LA 71325**

Not only is this a tribute to two outstanding leaders, it's a very worthwhile investment in agriculture's future...Please consider sending in your generous contribution today!

**Addressing Agricultural Water Challenges
in Louisiana Through Research and Extension:
LSU AgCenter's STAMP Program**
Naveen Adusumilli and Stacia L. Davis

Irrigation is required in most parts of Louisiana to ensure higher yield potential. Irrigation withdrawals for row crop agriculture in the state are about 2,700 acre-feet per day in 2012. Competition for surface and groundwater supplies is increasing in the state due to demand from sectors like industry, power generation, public supply, aquaculture, increasing irrigated acreage of crops, and occasional droughts. Hence, the need to safeguard water availability within Louisiana has become critical, not only to sustain the state's water resources, but also to the sustainability of sectors that depend on this important resource.

Insufficient irrigation water and inefficient irrigation in agriculture were the highest-ranked natural resource concerns for Louisiana in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. Hence, sound decisions focused on better crop-water management strategies is warranted to protect the continued productivity of irrigated agriculture in the state and address the agricultural water challenges. It is certain that new water sources will not be found to satisfy current and future irrigation needs, which calls for planning toward identification of strategies that ensure water availability for all reasonable present and future needs and promote conservation of water resources.

LSU AgCenter approach to addressing agricultural water challenges in the state include research, education, and outreach concerning irrigation water conservation and efficiency. As a result, Smart Technologies for Agricultural Management and Production (STAMP), a research and extension program, was initiated in 2014 at the Red River Research Station in Bossier City, LA. The STAMP program focuses on engineering and economic evaluation of smart irrigation technologies, economics of water management decisions, and agronomic and economic evaluation of management practices to prevent leaching of nutrients and soil erosion through on-farm demonstration, workshops, field days, and other educational opportunities for agricultural producers to promote sustainability. The STAMP program is based on the premise that efficient irrigation has the potential to address concerns over diminishing water resources, environmental regulation, changing climate, and rising costs of irrigated agriculture. The program emphasizes water conservation through proper irrigation management strategies as an ultimate goal to satisfy current and future irrigation needs.

The program also coordinates a quarterly water management task force meeting. The interdisciplinary task force team is composed of research and extension faculty and extension agents of the LSU AgCenter. Members focus on irrigation related research and extension across the state. Faculty expertise include agronomy, economics, engineering, entomology, and hydrology. The team identifies crop irrigation water related research needs identified through personal communications with farmers and addresses these needs through sound science. The goal is to proactively address the potential challenges in managing surface and ground waters of the state. The task force and the STAMP program

focus on developing long-term water management strategies that are profitable and conservation oriented.

2015 LACA Scholarships Awarded

Doctoral Scholarship

The recipient of the PhD Scholarship was Ms. Maryam Shahrtash who is pursuing her degree in Plant Health in the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Her major professor is Dr. Melanie Ivey. Maryam has a 3.5 GPA.

She received her BS and MS degrees from Azad University graduating 2nd in her BS degree class & 1st in her MS degree class in Agricultural Engineering & Plant Pathology. Her Masters research was on the benefits of silicon, salicylic acid and calcium on plant health in soils with high levels of cadmium. She published eight manuscripts and abstracts on her research and presented her findings at several national meetings. She graduated 1st in her Masters Degree program.

Currently, her research is focused on alternatives to copper for managing bacterial spot of peppers in seeds, transplants, and adult plants. Her research to date has provided evidence that selenium and silicon are absorbed by the roots of pepper plants and translocated to the leaves. The next phase of her research is to demonstrate that these elements can elicit a defense response against the three causative agents of bacterial leaf spot. Recently, she concluded research that shows that selenium can be used as a seed disinfectant. Results of her research will be presented at the 2015 Southern Division of the American Phytopathological Society Meeting.

Maryam has established a cooperative effort with the soil fertility scientists at LSU and is working with them on the effects of non-essential elements on soil health. In 2014, she presented the results of this collaborative relationship to soil scientists visiting from the University of Uberlandia, Brazil.

In addition to her research, Maryam is actively involved in the horticulture pathology program. She has trained fellow students in research techniques in plant pathology, assisted with field trials, participated in field days, and attended grower meetings. She is fluent in several languages and translates publications from German to English for departmental faculty. Maryam is active in the Departments Graduate Student Association where she serves on several committees. Upon completion of her PhD program, Maryam hopes to work in a university system as an extension specialist or in industry. She wants to work with growers and encourage them to implement sustainable management strategies that will minimize diseases, benefit the environment and contribute to the agricultural economy.

The doctoral scholarship was funded by Louisiana Land Bank, ACA. Presenting the scholarship was Stephen Austin, CEO.

cont'd on page 4...

Masters Scholarship

The recipient of one of the graduate scholarships was Mr. Matthew R. Foster, a graduate student at Louisiana State University who is pursuing a Master of Science degree in Agronomy with a concentration in Weed Science.

In 2007, Matthew graduated from Vidalia High School where he excelled in academics and other school related activities. From 2004-2007, he worked as a field scout for Agri-Services Ltd. His job included scouting cotton, soybeans, corn, grain sorghum, and rice for important pests. Matthew was employed from 2008 thru 2012 as an intern by the LSU Cooperative Extension Service in Vidalia, LA and worked under the supervision of Mr. Glen Daniels. His job responsibilities were assisting in conducting variety trials in a number of crops, helping LSU researchers and representatives of agro-chemical companies with aerial applications, and working during research station and agro-chemical company field days.

Matthew earned his Bachelor of Science degree from LSU in 2012; graduating with a 3.5 GPA in Plant and Soil Systems. During his undergraduate career, he worked as a student worker under the supervision of Dr. Rogers Leonard and became very interested in research and the developmental sector of the ag industry. Matthew entered graduate school and was hired as a graduate assistant by Dr. Jim Griffin and worked for him in the sugarcane and soybean weed science program. His research is focused on the evaluation of the residual activity of dicamba on soybeans as influenced by soil type and rainfall. He is also developing a procedure that uses early soybean injury symptoms to determine crop damage and the effect on yield.

Matthew has a 3.5 GPA in all graduate work and is rated in the top 1% of all graduate students in the Weed Science program. He earned a Louisiana Tops Scholarship; Dean J. G. Lee Scholarship and the 2012 LACA Undergraduate Scholarship. In addition, he is a member of the Weed Science Society of America, the Entomological Society of America, and has earned his LDAF Private Applicators License.

This graduate scholarship was funded by Phytogen, a subsidiary of Dow AgroSciences, and was presented by Mr. Brooks Blanche.

Undergraduate Scholarship

The recipient of the undergraduate scholarship funded by Ray & Dorothy Young of Young and Young Consultants, RiceTec, and Crop Production Services, was Mr. Luke Habetz.

Mr. Habetz grew up on a rice and soybean farm in Crowley, Louisiana and graduated from Notre Dame High School with a 3.5 GPA. In high school, Luke was a member of the Beta Club, Student Council, and Science Club. He was voted Most Likely to Succeed. In addition, Luke excelled in sports and was a member of his school's state championship football team, team captain of his basketball team, and participated in track and tennis.

Mr. Habetz worked on the family farm, and part time at Landry's Feed Store. During the summers of 2012 thru 2014 he worked as an assistant farm manager for Hetzel Farms where he performed

many daily farm chores and was personally responsible for the preparation, planting, and harvesting of over 200 acres of rice.

Luke is currently an Agribusiness major at LSU in Baton Rouge and has a 3.8 GPA that ranks him in the top five of all current Agribusiness majors at LSU. He is employed as an office assistant for Dr. Philip Elzer, Associate Vice Chancellor of the College of Agriculture. His scholarships & honors include TOPS, Fritz Lang Foundation Scholarship, and the William H. Alexander Memorial Scholarship in The Department of Agriculture Economics and Agribusiness. Luke is a member of Kappa Alpha and represents the College of Agriculture as a senator in the Louisiana State University Student Government Association. Community service includes an active volunteer in his church, a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity where he helped build two homes in Baton Rouge, and a volunteer for the Muscular Dystrophy Association where he helped his fraternity plan a silent auction that raised over twenty thousand dollars.

Presenting the undergrad scholarship were Ray & Dorothy Young of Young & Young Consultants, Cullen Minter of RiceTec, and Joe Pankey of Crop Production Services (CPS).



Pictured from left to right, Doctoral student, Maryam Shahrtash, Graduate (Masters) student, Matthew Foster, Undergraduate student, Luke Habetz, and 2014 LACA President, Randy Richard.



Dear Members of the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association,

I want to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to LACA for receiving the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Field Integrated Pest Management. It is an honor to be selected by you and I have a sense of obligation to perform at my best and conduct the best quality research to meet the needs of our growers in Louisiana. It was great to meet many of you in Marksville this February.

I also want to give you a little more detail about my dissertation studies. Aflatoxin contamination of corn continues to be problematic here in Louisiana and worldwide. Currently the most effective control of aflatoxin contamination is biocontrol by the application of non-toxigenic strains of *Aspergillus flavus*. This strategy is employed in the US and is being developed for many nations in Africa. There are some limitations; environmental conditions must be conducive for infection of the crop and the biocontrol is not effective against all strains of *Aspergillus flavus*. Therefore it is critical to improve the biocontrol technology. As I mentioned in February, Kenneth Damann's lab demonstrated when the biocontrol strain of *A. flavus* physically interacts with toxigenic strains, the toxigenic strains are limited in aflatoxin production. The main goal of my dissertation research is to characterize the genes involved in this interaction. I will be employing two techniques to potentially identify those genes. The first technique is a random mutagenesis of the fungus, in this technique genes are disrupted and become defective. Mutants will be screened and if there is no longer a reduction of aflatoxin production, we will identify that gene as a candidate gene for controlling the biocontrol

Shown from left to right, Ray and Dorothy Young, Rebecca Sweany, and her advisor, Dr. Kenneth E. Damann, Jr. Rebecca is the second recipient of the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship for Row Crop IPM.



interaction. This work will be complemented with genetic studies, where we characterize all of the genes that are being used in the biocontrol interaction. Thus the difference in gene-utilization between successful and unsuccessful biocontrol

interactions will also help identify candidate genes for controlling the biocontrol interaction. It is my hope that we can find some important regulatory genes which can be introduced into corn as a new management strategy for aflatoxin contamination. This would be similar to Bt-corn that was developed from a biocontrol bacteria against insect damage.

Thanks again for you awarding me the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Field Integrated Pest Management. I will make sure the money is used prudently. Your support of graduate education in agriculture is very important to LSU and the continued global leadership of US agriculture. It is my hope that you will continue to have success raising money to support assistantships.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Sweany
rsweany@agcenter.lsu.edu
302 Life Sciences
Baton Rouge, LA 70803



2015 LATMC Pest ID Winners

Travis Vallee—1st place \$200.00
Fred Collins—tied for 2nd place \$125.00
Dwayne Coulon—tied for 2nd place \$125.00
Josh Copes—3rd place \$75.00
Bentley Curry—4th place \$50.00

Congratulations, Gentlemen!!!

Travis will be preparing and hosting the 2016 Crop Production and Protection Quiz...sharpen your knowledge in the field this season for next year's challenge...

Richard L. Jensen Scholarship NAICC Foundation Scholarships

New for 2015! Three scholarships will be awarded. \$3,000 for the Jensen Scholarship and two \$1,500 NAICC Foundation Scholarships. One application will be eligible for all three scholarships and will be awarded based on merit.

Application Deadline November 1, 2015. Please review the scholarship criteria at <http://thefeae.org/jensen-scholarship/> before submitting the application.

Networking at the 2015 Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference were left, Rustin Gilder of Crowley Grain Drier, and right, Jerry Ford of BASF Corporation.



Al Broussard, listens intently while David Brewster of Gypsoil, LLC explains how their product works in sugarcane.



Dr. Jeff Davis gets excited about telling others about some of the insect research that is currently being conducted by the AgCenter.

Reflecting on the 2015 LATMC

Our annual consultants' meeting, the Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference was a little down in attendance this year, I think primarily due to having good weather during the meeting, and some needing to be in the fields. The weather was so opposite what we experienced in 2014 when those from the North had to brave icy roads to get to Marksville, where they found ice-laden palm trees at the Paragon Resort. We held our first silent auction and gun raffle last year to benefit the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Row Crop IPM, and due to its success, yielding over \$14,000, the Executive Board decided to hold these events again this year. Even though attendance was down this year, we raised over \$18,000 towards this worthy cause. We are very close to meeting our pledge of \$300,000. On behalf of the Executive Board and our membership, I encourage you to contribute to the Endowment to help us reach our goal in 2015. See page 2 of this newsletter for more information.

Don Johnson of FMC Corporation was the proud winner of the AR-15 223 Caliber Rifle with \$200.00 Cabelas gift certificate.



2016 LACA Scholarships Available

Paul Templet, Chair of the Scholarship Committee and members of his committee have worked very hard to recruit applicants for the three scholarships awarded each year at our annual meeting, as well as spending many rigorous hours going through applications, transcripts, and references to glean the most worthy students for these scholarships. The scholarship criteria and application can be found on the LACA website at <http://www.laca1.org/LACAScholarshipRequirements-112014.pdf>. If you know of an undergrad, graduate, or doctoral student who might qualify, please encourage them to apply in the fall (deadline January 10, 2016).

Become a Tigers Advocate

Visit www.lsualumni.org/tigeradvocates

Sign up today!

You will receive email notifications at critical times when your voice needs to be heard in the state legislature. With just a click or call, your legislators will know the LSU Tiger Nation are closely monitoring legislative decisions that impact the future of LSU. Your legislators represent YOU...Show them you care about LSU and they will to...

All state legislators can be accessed from this website, so register as a Tigers Advocate today!

Welcome New Members!!!

Joining LACA as a new Affiliate member, is **Dr. Dan Fromme** of the LSU AgCenter.

Joining LACA as sustaining members in 2015 are **Gypsoil, LLC, Progressive Tractor & Implement Company, Raymat Crop Science, Spectrum Technologies, Inc., United Phosphorus, Inc. (UPI), and Verdesian Life Sciences.**

For information on membership in NAICC go to www.naicc.org or contact Allison Jones at JonesNAICC@aol.com or Denise Wright at wrightpme@aol.com

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jerry.ford@basf.com

2015 Printed Directory

If you are an individual member or sustaining member contact of LACA, be looking out for your 2015 membership directory to arrive in the mail soon. The directory is also distributed to distinguished friends of the LACA. If you would like to have a copy of the directory and are not a member of LACA, email or call Denise at denise@laca1.org or 337-945-3694 and she'll make sure you get one. The cost to cover printing/postage is \$15.00.